

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 AMMAN 06492 110859Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 ACDA-07 L-03 IO-13 SSM-03
OMB-01 TRSE-00 /072 W
-----051555 110911Z /15 L

R 110812Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3107
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

S E C R E T AMMAN 6492

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, JO, IS, XF
SUBJECT: ISRAELI TROOP MOVEMENTS IN WEST BANK

REF: AMMAN 6241

1. I SAW JORDANIAN ARMY COMMANDER IN CHIEF BIN SHAKER AT MY OWN REQUEST SEPTEMBER 10 TO DISCUSS A NUMBER OF U.S.-JORDANIAN ISSUES.
2. DURING MY CALL, BIN SHAKER, READING FROM A FILE FOLDER, PROVIDED ME WITH ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON ABOVE SUBJECT WHICH HE SAID CONSTITUTED A SERIOUS CONCERN FOR JORDAN.
3. HE MADE A GENERAL REFERENCE TO MOVEMENTS OF TANKS, APCS, AND ARTILLERY OF THE IDF FROM THE JERUSALEM AREA DOWN TOWARD JERICHO. HE SAID HE WAS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE MOVEMENTS OF BRIDGING EQUIPMENT. HE NOTED THAT ON 15 AUGUST SOURCES HE CONSIDERED COMPLETELY RELIABLE REPORTED MOVEMENT OF THREE BRIDGE-LAYING TANKS AND ON 6 SEPTEMBER

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JORDANIAN SOURCE REPORTED FOUR APCS CARRYING BRIDGING EQUIPMENT AND OTHER FLOATING BRIDGE GEAR BEING MOVED INTO THE SAME AREA. ON 1 SEPT, HE HAD REPORT OF 100 APCS MOVING FROM NABLUS TO AREA IDENTIFIED AS "FASAIL" IN THE JORDAN VALLEY CLOSE TO THE RIVER. HE ALSO REPORTED LARGER MOVEMENTS OF ARMOR FROM NATANIA TO BEISAN WHICH HE SAID WAS SYRIA'S PROBLEM,

NOT HIS.

4. FINALLY HE SAID THAT JORDAN KEEPS A CAREFUL EYE ON ISRAELI EXERCISE AREAS IN THE WEST BANK AND THESE MOVEMENTS WERE OUTSIDE OF THE USUAL EXERCISE AREAS, WERE NOT UNIT ROTATIONS AS FAR AS HE COULD TELL AND THUS CONSTITUTED A BUILD-UP.

5. I ASKED ABOUT BRIDGING EQUIPMENT AND HE SAID THAT GIVEN IDF'S ENGINEERING CAPABILITY SPECIALIZED BRIDGING EQUIPMENT IS PROBABLY NOT REALLY NEEDED FOR A JORDAN RIVER CROSSING, "BUT YOU KNOW THEY ALWAYS OVERKILL EVERYTHING."

6. COMMENT: WE REALIZE THAT MUCH OF THIS IS IN THE SAME VEIN AS THE KING'S EARLIER REMARKS TO ME ON WHICH EMBASSY TEL AVIV HAS COMMENTED EXTENSIVELY. I OFFERED BIN SHAKER LITTLE IN THE WAY OF COMMENT EXCEPT TO SAY THAT WE DO NOTICE FROM TIME TO TIME ISRAELI EXERCISE ACTIVITY. I DID NOT PROMISE TO PROVIDE BIN SHAKER WITH ANYTHING FURTHER AND HE DID NOT ASK, BUT HE WANTED US TO BE AWARE OF JORDAN'S CONTINUING PRE-OCCUPATION WITH CONCEPT THAT ISRAELI MILITARY MOVEMENTS AGAINST EAST BANK, IN JORDAN'S VIEW, CANNOT BE ENTIRELY RULED OUT. I ASSUME THAT
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SINCE BIN SAKER WAITED TO INFORM ME OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS AT THE TIME OF OUR PRE-SET MEETING, HE IS NOT HIMSELF OVERLY CONCERNED, BUT MERELY WISH TO KEEP US IN THE PCITURE.
PICKERING

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NNN

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